

**NATO AND THE EUROPEAN UNION:
IMPROVING PRACTICAL COOPERATION**
A Transatlantic Workshop
Organized by the Institute for National Strategic Studies
In Partnership with the Ministry of Defence of Finland*
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March 20-21, 2006

Executive Summary

The NATO-EU relationship is a work in progress. Notwithstanding their differences in membership, ambitions, structures and decision-making, the two organizations have established a generally good record of cooperation in Bosnia and, after a somewhat bumpier start, in Sudan/Darfur. NATO and the EU have complementary interests and comparative advantages in developing rapid reaction capabilities and improving civilian-military responses to a wide range of areas, including disaster relief, conflict prevention, crisis management, and post-conflict stabilization and reconstruction. Their operational experience has provided valuable important lessons for possible collaboration in future crisis management contingencies. Among these are:

- Unclear and/or overlapping mandates for NATO and EU military activities in the same country should be avoided. Both organizations need a better understanding of each others structures, and planning for cooperation—particularly arrangements for intelligence sharing—should begin as early as possible, which might also enhance early warning.
- As military support to civilian and law enforcement tasks are likely to remain prominent in NATO and EU crisis management operations, both organizations and their member states' militaries need to prepare themselves for such tasks and to develop procedures for cooperation with each other as well as other international organizations and NGOs.
- The NAC-PSC channel could be used to sort out future cooperation, adopting the broadest possible interpretation of Berlin Plus. NATO and the EU should talk more about what they could do for one another versus what they cannot, and review their doctrine and concepts for supporting third party organizations.

* This summary of proceedings was prepared by INSS Senior Research Fellow Leo Michel, with the assistance of INSS Research Intern Zoe Hunter. The views and opinions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect those of the National Defense University or the U.S. Department of Defense.

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- The NRF and EU Battlegroups can be mutually reinforcing. NATO and the EU might consider joint training exercises for NRF and Battlegroup units to improve interoperability, work toward common standards for unit certification, and be fully transparent in planning for rotations. A new staff-level NATO-EU group might be constituted to work on capabilities; it could be supported by the NATO and EU military liaison cells and increased contacts between the EDA and ACT. PFP members who are EU member states should have close liaison arrangements with the NRF to enhance interoperability.
- NATO and the EU should give high priority to enhancing civilian-military cooperation drawing on lessons that national governments have learned. Informal meetings of NATO-EU foreign ministers and regular NAC-PSC and Military Committee meetings could discuss cooperation on civilian-military responses. Regular NATO-EU exercises focused on civilian-military crisis response capabilities might also be conducted.

During this workshop, some 80 European, Canadian, and U.S. officials, military officers, and experts explored these issues *on a personal and unofficial basis*, offering several specific suggestions on how to improve practical cooperation between these two vital actors in the Euro-Atlantic community.

Background

In December 2002, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the European Union (EU) formally declared a “strategic partnership...in crisis management, founded on [their] shared values, the indivisibility of [their] security and [their] determination to tackle the challenges of the new century.” They also “recognized the need for arrangements to ensure the coherent, transparent and mutually reinforcing development of the capability requirements common to the two organizations, with a spirit of openness.” The logic of cooperation grew even stronger with their respective enlargements in 2004. Today, 19 of the 25 EU member states are NATO allies and four are members of Partnership for Peace (PFP). Each of these 23 states has one set of forces and one defense budget to meet NATO, EU, and national commitments, and there is no margin for wasteful duplication or divergent doctrines and standards that would increase the risks inherent in military operations. However, the NATO-EU relationship remains a work in progress.

By and large, the public rhetoric emanating from NATO and EU headquarters and their member governments is positive, and the mantra of “cooperation, not competition” is now commonplace. The top political and military bodies of the Alliance, the North Atlantic Council (NAC) and NATO Military Committee, meet periodically with their counterparts in the EU, the Political and Security Committee (PSC) and EU Military Committee. In late 2005, the two organizations agreed to establish small liaison cells in each other’s military staffs. Moreover, cooperation in Bosnia-Herzegovina—where an EU Force (EUFOR) succeeded NATO’s Stabilization Force (SFOR) in December 2004—has gone well, despite some rough patches at the start.

Yet the level of NATO-EU cooperation is far from ideal. The formal NAC-PSC and NATO and EU Military Committee meetings have a narrow agenda and tend to be set-piece affairs. When it comes to consultations and cooperation on subjects beyond Bosnia-Herzegovina—for example, on assisting the African Union (AU) in Darfur—the specter of a “beauty contest” between the two organizations occasionally has surfaced. In addition, substantive joint work on capabilities development is spotty, as are broader staff-to-staff contacts.

On March 20-21, 2006, the National Defense University’s Institute for National Strategic Studies, in partnership with the Ministry of Defence of Finland and with support from the U.S. Departments of Defense and State, assembled some 80 European, Canadian, and U.S. officials, military officers, and experts to explore these and related issues in a workshop on *NATO and the European Union: Improving Practical Cooperation*. The workshop, held at the National Defense University and Embassy of Finland in Washington, DC, was designed to identify and discuss options to enhance the ability of these two leading international actors to work together effectively following a political decision to do so. The workshop, however, did not seek to develop common recommendations regarding where, or under what conditions, specific cooperation should take place.

Participants focused on four key areas: lessons learned from NATO-EU cooperation in Bosnia-Herzegovina; NATO and EU assistance to the AU in Darfur; interconnections between the rapid reaction capabilities being developed by both organizations; and prospects for cooperation between NATO and the EU in civilian-led, military-supported responses to certain natural disasters or terrorist threats. In keeping with its exploratory and informal nature and to encourage candid dialogue, the entire workshop was conducted under National Defense University’s standard non-attribution rules (similar to “Chatham House” rules) whereby participants spoke on *a personal and unofficial basis, and agreed not to quote or attribute indirectly comments of other participants outside the workshop*.

Bosnia-Herzegovina

The first panel examined NATO-EU cooperation in Bosnia-Herzegovina from the perspectives of: senior military officers who, during late 2004 through late 2005, played key roles within SFOR (and, subsequently, NATO Headquarters in Sarajevo) and EUFOR; a European officer who has served as an EU military representative at SHAPE since early 2003; and a civilian representative of an allied mission at NATO Headquarters in Brussels who has extensive experience in Balkan operations. Panelists and participants broadly agreed that the current excellent level of cooperation depended heavily—perhaps excessively—on the initiative, adaptability, and pragmatism of the first EUFOR and NATO on-scene commanders who faced unclear and overlapping mandates.

According to the panelists and participants, several factors complicated the situation in Bosnia-Herzegovina:

- ***Berlin-Plus (the set of NATO-EU agreements in 2003 that provide, inter alia, the basis for consultation and cooperation in crisis management, defense planning, and exchange of classified information) did not foresee the type of situation that arose with Bosnia-Herzegovina.*** At its core, Berlin-Plus was designed to allow the Alliance to support EU-led operations in which NATO as a whole is not engaged. However, as a result of the NATO Istanbul Summit in June 2004 and subsequent decisions, NATO continued to have an important role in Bosnia-Herzegovina alongside the incoming EUFOR. In retrospect, many now believe that only a tenuous consensus was reached at the summit and ministerial levels, and that political-level officials of NATO, the EU, and member governments did not make the necessary effort to delineate clear mandates for their respective representatives in Sarajevo.
- ***Senior EU political officials directed in late 2004 that EUFOR should be distinct from SFOR and make a positive contribution to the overall Bosnian situation, but the Operations Plan (OPLAN) approved by the EU contained important tasks that were not traditionally military in nature.*** EUFOR inherited SFOR's primary mission of ensuring compliance with the Dayton Accords and deterring any potential resumption of hostilities among the entities. However, SFOR's success in achieving a benign security environment had left EUFOR's nearly 7,000 troops with relatively little to do in terms of strictly military tasks. Hence, EUFOR's secondary mission—to support efforts by the Office of the High Representative and EU Special Representative (OHR), then Mr. Paddy Ashdown, to develop the economy, establish rule of law, and reform the corrupt and ineffective police force—soon became EUFOR's primary focus. Many of those support tasks were essentially non-military in nature, and it was not easy to create synergies between the military and other international actors; EUFOR, for example, initially had poor relations with the civilian EU Police Mission (EUPM). Eventually, EUFOR directed much of its manpower and assets—including patrols, intelligence collection and data bases, communications, and helicopters—to fight organized crime, which the OHR had identified as a major obstacle to good governance and economic development. By late 2005, internecine EU “turf wars” and disagreements among EU member states over EUFOR's role had largely receded, and the value of intelligence sharing among EUFOR, EUPM, and NATO to defeat organized crime and build the rule of law was validated.
- ***The SFOR Commander (a U.S. officer who, after the transition to EUFOR in December 2004, was appointed Commander of NATO Headquarters in Sarajevo) had several objectives: to terminate SFOR in an orderly fashion; to stand up a smaller NATO Headquarters in Sarajevo with a limited mandate; to ensure that EUFOR was successful; and to make sure that the U.S. presence, albeit diminished in terms of troops, continued to reassure the Bosniac community and serve to balance the perceived sympathies of certain European states for other ethnic groups.*** At various points, however, there were trade-offs and frictions among these objectives. Some SFOR-EUFOR transition issues were complicated but manageable, such as the division of budgets, housing, and headquarters

personnel. (Approximately two-thirds of SFOR headquarters personnel were destined to move to EUFOR headquarters.) Intelligence sharing was more problematic; for a few months after the transition, NATO authorities in Sarajevo did not have permission to share materials classified as NATO SECRET with EUFOR. Moreover, the mandate of NATO Headquarters in Sarajevo contained elements—such as defense reform, counter-terrorism, and the detention of persons indicted by the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia—that, at a minimum, affected EUFOR’s mission as well. Since various allies were not fully satisfied with the decisions taken at Istanbul and subsequent NAC meetings, some sought to limit the day-to-day ability of the NATO Commander in Sarajevo to execute his guidance. (Similar constraints were experienced by the EUFOR commander.)

- ***Faced with political and bureaucratic blockages within and between NATO and EU Headquarters in Brussels—which, on occasion, elevated minutiae to senior political levels for decision--EUFOR and NATO Headquarters in Sarajevo resorted by necessity to hammering out pragmatic approaches to operational and administrative problems.*** Knowing their actions would set important precedents for future cooperation, the commanders of each organization in Sarajevo took pains to record many of their agreements in memoranda of understanding and standard operating procedures, which then were presented to their respective political authorities in Brussels essentially as *faits accomplis*. While this accomplished a primary goal of both commanders—i.e., to not expose their forces to needless risk--it was not an entirely satisfactory solution. For example, NATO and the EU appeared to hold different views on the priority attached to detaining indicted war criminals, complicating the ability of their respective on-scene commanders and the OHR to coordinate a “carrot and stick” approach with Bosnian authorities.
- ***An EU military representative at SHAPE and an official of an allied mission at NATO Headquarters noted additional factors that complicated cooperation regarding Bosnia-Herzegovina.*** The EU, while keen to demonstrate its “autonomy” from NATO and holistic approach to crisis management, did not coordinate effectively within its internal structures and across its “pillars”--especially in Brussels. Indeed, some in the EU were surprised and frustrated to learn in mid-2004 that NATO was to remain engaged as an organization in Bosnia-Herzegovina, as this had not been clear to all of the EU parties engaged in planning for the transition. From a NATO perspective, it was important to demonstrate that the Alliance could successfully terminate a peacekeeping operation, and the EU, in a sense, came to NATO’s rescue in Bosnia-Herzegovina. That said, many in NATO appreciated the need for broad participation by various international organizations in stabilizing and reconstructing failed or failing states. Berlin Plus, however, did not foresee the growing need for NATO to cooperate effectively with relevant EU structures outside the “second pillar” and EU Council Secretariat context.

The panelists and participants identified several “lessons learned” from NATO-EU cooperation to date in Bosnia-Herzegovina:

- ***Unclear and/or overlapping mandates for NATO and EU military activities in the same country should be avoided.*** They can create serious problems for commanders on the ground and contribute to an unhelpful sense of institutional competition in Brussels. If the mandates are clear from the start, local commanders should have broad authority to work out practical implementation issues at the lowest possible level. Political-level decision-makers also need to be clearer on what they expect the military to do in support of civilian authorities.
- ***NATO needs to better understand how the various EU structures work and vice versa, and planning for cooperation—and, in particular, arrangements for intelligence sharing--should begin at the earliest practicable stage of a crisis management operation.*** The recent establishment of military liaison cells in NATO and EU military staffs should help in this regard. A better dialogue between NATO and the EU involving the Commission also would help.
- ***Bosnia-Herzegovina is no longer primarily a military issue for NATO or the EU, but rather a state-building issue.*** As civilian and law enforcement-oriented tasks for the military are likely to become more prominent in crisis management operations under NATO or EU auspices, both organizations and their member states’ militaries need to prepare themselves for such tasks. To achieve their shared goals in post-conflict situations, NATO and the EU need to define, in cooperation with other major international actors (e.g., the UN, OSCE, World Bank, and non-government organizations), who is “in charge” of the International Community effort. The OHR “Board of Principals” has performed reasonably well in enhancing coordination Bosnia-Herzegovina, and some variation might eventually be needed for Kosovo. Various International Community actors have distinctive “carrots and sticks” to deploy, but they need to do so in a more coordinated fashion.
- ***Lessons learned from one crisis management operation should be applied to others.*** For instance, police recruits in Kosovo have been subject to polygraphs as one tool to root out corruption, but the EUPM has no authority to do this in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Sudan/Darfur

The second panel examined cooperation in Darfur (and potential cooperation in other areas of Africa) from the perspectives of: a U.S. State Department official; and defense and foreign ministry officials from three European member states of both NATO and the EU. Panelists and participants broadly agreed that the appearance of a “beauty contest” (or, put less charitably, “bureaucratic squabbling”) between the two organizations in spring 2005 in respect to assisting the AU in Darfur had been a disservice to all parties and should not be repeated. They also broadly agreed that neither NATO nor the EU was prepared to make substantial force commitments to meet Africa’s extensive (and growing)

need for crisis management capabilities, especially in long-term peacekeeping and/or peace-enforcement scenarios. NATO and the EU, however, could play an important role in enhancing AU and UN capabilities to deal with African crises.

The panelists and participants raised several issues:

- ***Published articles (note: in May-June 2005) reporting a “beauty contest,” although lasting only a few days, perhaps spurred NATO and the EU to find a speedier solution to inter-organizational issues involving aid to the AU, but the articles did have some basis in fact.*** Some Europeans believed that NATO went beyond the understanding reached at its April 2005 foreign ministers’ meeting on how it would respond to a request for assistance from the AU. In their view, NATO in effect sought to preclude EU involvement in key aspects of support for the AU, notwithstanding the EU’s engagement in Darfur since 2004. Other Europeans alluded to their discomfort, as members of both organizations, in having to choose whether to provide their military assets under NATO or EU auspices. An allied officer working at NATO Headquarters pointed out that NATO today has engaged in various theaters outside Europe (e.g., ISAF in Afghanistan, disaster relief in Pakistan, and the NATO Training Mission in Iraq); hence, arguing that NATO has no historical experience in Africa is not a strong reason why NATO should not be engaged there. A European official observed that, looking back at discussions in spring 2005, both transatlantic relations and North-South relations were mishandled. The former were roiled by the inclination of some in NATO to apply Berlin Plus arrangements to Darfur; the latter were complicated by drawing AU leaders into a NATO-EU spat. According to this view, the relevant military actors fortunately were able to sort out or work around the institutional problems, albeit with some inefficiencies (e.g., in airlift coordination) and duplication of efforts.
- ***Notwithstanding its rocky start, NATO and EU assistance to the AU had a positive impact over the summer, but the situation on the ground began deteriorating again in September.*** U.S. assessments point to an increasingly confused and multilayered conflict, involving: clashes between Sudanese government-supported forces and rebels in Darfur; fighting between various rebel groups (including Chadian rebels serving as proxies for Sudanese authorities); and a generalized rise in violent banditry. U.S. and EU officials are now in close agreement on critical next steps, to include: laying the groundwork for a transition from the current AU force to a larger and more capable UN-led force (which would include a significant African component); in the interim, strengthening the AU’s capabilities through training, airlift, and other support; preventing an outbreak of war along the Sudan-Chad border; and keeping pressure on all parties to the Darfur conflict to reach a peace settlement.
- ***While an absolute division of labor between NATO and EU efforts in Darfur might not be possible, each has areas of comparative advantage to assist the AU and, eventually, the UN.*** Some officials suggested that NATO’s strengths would

lay in coordinating and providing airlift and higher-level staff training to African military forces while the EU would focus on police training and civilian-military tasks. The EU's unique role in providing financial support to the AU and international humanitarian relief efforts was noted, as well.

- ***Discussions of NATO and EU engagement in Darfur cannot take place in a vacuum; other demands on their members' capabilities need to be kept in mind.*** According to one European participant, NATO and EU efforts to date, and those under discussion for the future (including UN blue helmets), failed to directly address the core question in Darfur: how to protect the civilian population in an area approximately the size of France and where Africans do not want European or American ground forces engaged? The logical solution would be to deploy a large UN operation (on the order of 50-60,000 troops) with combat aircraft and attack helicopters to deter and, if necessary, strike those forces attacking civilians. Only NATO, it was suggested, could provide such air support and associated intelligence. In response, others pointed to: the enormous logistical effort that would be required to support such an effort; the demands already placed on American, Canadian, and European forces deployed elsewhere (e.g., in the Balkans, Afghanistan, and Iraq); and the current lack of political will within NATO or the EU to undertake such an expensive and potentially open-ended engagement. One official emphasized that there remained avenues other than direct NATO intervention to stop the genocide, to include: adding enablers to AU forces; exploring the potential for using air assets from non-NATO or EU members; and de-linking the transition to a UN force from the conclusion of a peace agreement. Moreover, political will is not a given; it can change rapidly in the face of disasters.

(Note: During this session, European panelists also outlined the planned EU operation in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Pursuant to a UN request in late 2005, the EU agreed to deploy a "deterrence" force in and nearby the DRC during the approximately four month period between the upcoming election rounds, i.e., from mid-June through mid-October. Details pertaining to the EU force composition, concept of operations, and mandate were still under consideration at the time of this workshop. The panelists did not address the subject of NATO-EU cooperation in the context of the planned operation in the DRC.)

Regarding future cooperation in Darfur, panelists and participants broadly agreed:

- ***The NAC-PSC channel should be used to a greater extent to sort out cooperation on Darfur, which—as noted by a European official—would be facilitated by adopting the broadest possible interpretation of Berlin Plus.*** As one participant suggested, NATO and the EU should talk more about what they could do for one another versus what they cannot. In addition, NATO and the EU perhaps should review their doctrine and concepts on how best to support third party organizations such as the UN and AU. NATO and the EU should not allow their ambitions to help in Darfur get out of step with their capabilities; nor should they talk themselves out of taking any effective action.

NATO & EU Rapid reaction capabilities

The third panel examined options for cooperation in the development of the NATO Response Force and EU Battlegroups from the perspectives of: a senior European military officer from a member state of NATO and the EU; a senior European military officer from a member state of the EU and PFP; a European official from a member state of NATO that is not an EU member; and a U.S. Department of Defense official. Panelists and participants agreed that conceptually and, to some degree, in practice, the NRF and Battlegroups were mutually reinforcing. However, they identified several areas where practical steps in cooperation might be considered to improve interoperability within and between the two sets of rapid reaction capabilities.

The following were among the key discussion points raised by panelists and participants:

- ***There are multiple and significant areas of commonality or similarity between the NRF and Battlegroups.*** Both reflect their respective organization's and member states' recognition of the need to: substantially improve their ability to deploy, employ, sustain, and rotate forces to support their new security strategies; achieve higher levels of combat readiness across the membership of both organizations; and improve the multinational conduct of operations, although not at the expense of military effectiveness. The NRF and Battlegroups also face some common challenges; for example, both must deal with inadequate investment in defense capabilities by some member states (i.e., burdensharing") and problems in funding actual operations. Regarding the latter, several Europeans expressed reservations regarding proposals to broaden common funding for NATO operations or to cover capability shortfalls; some were particularly concerned that such proposals would adversely affect their national defense resources available for investment in needed capabilities or constrain their ability to conduct national operations, if required, outside NATO auspices.
- ***Differences between the two sets of capabilities also must be kept in mind.*** The NRF at Full Operational Capability in late 2006 will reach approximately 25,000 personnel, including ground, air, and maritime components that can be "mission tailored." Each of the planned 13 or so Battlegroups will total approximately 1500 ground personnel, and there is little impulse within the EU to develop air and maritime components similar to those of the NRF or to merge Battlegroups into larger, composite forces. In addition, the EU does not have a "force generation" conference or a centralized certification process comparable to NATO's, placing greater responsibility on the EU "framework nation" to organize its individual Battlegroup. For some Europeans, such differences reflect, in part, underlying differences between the NRF and Battlegroups as "transformation tools." According to this analysis, the NRF represents an impressive tool for "military transformation" in a transatlantic context, especially through the development of deployable, joint and combined capabilities. A principal contribution of the

Battlegroups is their role in transforming European attitudes toward defense. For example, the French-German-Spanish and Franco-German-Polish Battlegroups necessitated greater cooperation among their defense and foreign ministries, adoption of common rules of engagement, and reshaping of military staffs.

- ***Achieving synergies between the NRF and Battlegroups, while attractive in theory, has not been so simple in practice.*** In principle, the overlap of European members in NATO and the EU, as well as the important participation of certain Partners (e.g., Finland and Sweden) in NATO-led operations, should make it easy to solve interoperability problems, but this is not always the case. As forces have become more sophisticated, getting up to four militaries to work together in a battalion-size force (as in the Battlegroups) can be daunting, especially as some nations might be tempted to look for the easier military tasks. Smaller nations risk being disproportionately affected by a lack of coordination and information flow between NATO and the EU; this is particularly inexcusable in crisis management operations, where inadequate cooperation could lead to casualties in the field. Some participants observed that there is no strong evidence as yet that the NRF or Battlegroups have succeeded in improving standards across European forces.
- ***For some, the issues involving NATO and EU cooperation on rapid reaction capabilities are part of a broader fabric of underlying political tension between the two organizations.*** According to one European official, NATO member states that are not in the EU are concerned that the EU is developing a more solid consensus on foreign and security policy than exists inside the Alliance. In this official's view, recent decisions by the EU to launch numerous "autonomous" civilian and civil-military missions indicate that the use of Berlin Plus arrangements likely will be more the exception than the rule. Furthermore, according to this analysis, the United States in effect has contributed to a growing "Europeanization" of defense by: treating NATO as a "European" organization and an "instrument" of U.S. policy rather than as a transatlantic alliance; and not assigning significant American forces to the NRF, notably in its ground component. In response, a U.S. official called attention to the large U.S. force commitments in Afghanistan (working closely with ISAF) and Iraq, and its continuing presence in Kosovo and elsewhere. The official recalled that the NRF was first developed and championed under U.S. Department of Defense leadership. Encouraging the European allies to take leadership roles in filling NRF rotations was intended to help drive European transformation efforts. That said, the NRF remains a critical element of NATO's transformation, and the United States is looking at options to increase its force contributions to the NRF as troop levels are reduced elsewhere.

The panelists and participants identified a number of suggestions to improve NATO-EU cooperation on rapid reaction capabilities:

- ***NATO and the EU should conduct joint training exercises for NRF and Battlegroup units to improve interoperability and their capability, if necessary, to work together.*** (Note: Participants did not discuss whether the NRF and

Battlegroups could be committed in parallel to the same crisis. It was suggested, however, that Battlegroups might need a readily available strategic reserve to deal with unforeseen contingencies and that the NRF might be useful in this regard.)

- ***NATO and the EU should work toward common standards for unit certification and be fully transparent in planning for NRF and Battlegroup rotations.*** It was suggested that the NATO Joint Warfare Center (Stavanger) could play useful roles in training and certification for the Battlegroups.
- ***A staff-level NATO-EU group (separate from the existing policy level NATO-EU Capabilities Group) should be constituted to work on practical defense planning issues related to NRF and Battlegroup capabilities development.*** The existing arrangement, in the view of some, has become a sterile and unproductive forum. The work of the staff-level group could be facilitated by the recently-established NATO and EU military liaison cells. Increased contacts between the EU's European Defense Agency and NATO's Allied Command Transformation also would be helpful.
- ***PFP members who are EU member states should have close liaison arrangements with the NRF.*** Partners have played important roles in NATO-led operations and are making significant contributions to the Battlegroups. Pending agreement on possible Partner participation in NRF rotations, close liaison arrangements would enhance interoperability of Partner and NATO militaries.

Civil-military cooperation

The final panel examined options for cooperation in civilian-military responses to a range of disasters and conflict situations from the perspectives of: a senior European foreign ministry official from an EU member state; a NATO International Staff official; a U.S. Department of State official; and an EU Military Staff (EUMS) officer. Panelists and participants agreed that both NATO and the EU understood the importance of civilian-military cooperation as part of a comprehensive approach to disaster relief, conflict prevention, crisis management, and post-conflict stabilization and reconstruction. They also broadly agreed on steps to improve the complementary use of each organization's comparative advantages, without compromising their decision-making autonomy.

The following were among the key discussion points raised by panelists and participants:

- ***The term "civilian-military response" can be misleading.*** The balance between "civilian" and "military" efforts and responsibilities are scenario dependent. NATO is not uniquely a "military" organization; nor is the EU uniquely "civilian." Both are engaged, and will be engaged in the future, in situations that involve military support to civilian-led operations and vice versa. Hence, the logic of cooperation between the organizations is clear-cut.

- ***Many Europeans consider the “blending” of civilian and military capabilities to be one of the EU’s core strengths.*** The EU is currently engaged in 11 essentially civilian crisis management situations—ranging from the Balkans to Palestinian territories to Indonesia—and demands for EU involvement are growing fast. The EU’s response time is steadily improving; for example, EU monitors (many of whom have military backgrounds) were deployed in Aceh within a month of the peace agreement. Finland intends to place a high priority on completing a new document on EU procedures for civilian-military cooperation when it assumes the EU Presidency in July 2006. The document will include elements to improve coordination with external partners, including NATO, but as a rule, the EU’s greatest challenge is to improve its internal procedures and coordination.
- ***Within the rubric of European Security and Defense Policy, the EU is developing new tools (e.g., the Monitoring and Information Centre, or MIC, in Brussels), expanding its civilian protection efforts to the wider Mediterranean region, and seeking to develop capabilities—including in the areas of strategic lift, and medical and logistical support—to improve its disaster response within and outside the EU.*** In support of such efforts, the EUMS is developing its scenario-based contingency planning tools and the EU Council is looking to improve its decision-making response time. It was noted, however, that to date the EU has not deployed its military assets in disaster situations (unlike NATO’s disaster relief operation following the Pakistan earthquake.)
- ***In recent years, NATO has moved beyond its Cold War approach to civil protection and civil support to military operations in defense of NATO territory.*** NATO’s focus has shifted to include the use of military capabilities to address consequence management challenges and serve as an “enabler” for civil agencies, as demonstrated by humanitarian operations in Albania (1999), disaster relief in Pakistan (2005-6), and support to reconstruction operations in Afghanistan (2003-present). NATO and the EU should be “natural partners” in broad-based crisis management. If NATO forces are expected to deliver on NATO’s portion of an operation’s overall “end state”, then NATO must have the mandate and procedures to engage other international partners on concerted planning and action.
- ***The U.S. approach to civilian-military cooperation has evolved significantly in recent years, and this has implications for NATO-EU cooperation.*** Evidence of the U.S. evolution is found in: a November 2005 Department of Defense Directive positing that stability operations are henceforth to be considered “a core U.S. military mission” that should be given “priority comparable to combat operations”; and a newly-established Office of the Coordinator for Stabilization and Reconstruction in the Department of State. The United States does not subscribe to the view that NATO should address only “military” operations. NATO has proved its effectiveness in non-traditional civilian-military operations (e.g., Hurricane Katrina and the Pakistan earthquake) and in the NATO Provincial Reconstruction Teams’ support for stabilization and reconstruction in Afghanistan; and future NATO missions likely will require some combination of military and civilian

capabilities through all phases of those missions. As a rule, the United States prefers, when working in partnership with Europe in response to crises, to work through NATO. This is compatible with closer NATO-EU coordination, as the United States welcomes the development of a strong and capable European partner.

- ***The EU and NATO appear to have established the necessary authorities to conduct civilian-military operations, with some differences in approach.*** As a rule, the EU preference is to provide humanitarian aid as part of UN-led assistance efforts; ESDP does not come into play until EU military capabilities are needed. In NATO, Ministerial Guidance (including the 2005 Comprehensive Political Guidance) and Military Committee documents establish the necessary authorities for civilian support to the military, the military's role in protecting civilian populations, and its role in stabilization and reconstruction efforts, and the Euro-Atlantic Disaster Response Coordination Centre (EADRCC) brings in PFP members. Several participants noted that the use of military assets for disaster relief is not always the best approach politically or the most cost-effective. Moreover, some expressed concern NATO, the EU, and member states run the risk of investing heavily in military capabilities that are used (for example, in disaster relief operations) for purposes for which they were not designed. Others noted, however, that the military's role in civilian-military efforts is determined by the specific crisis, and that the lion's share of military equipment—especially aircraft—frequently has been used for other than its intended purpose.

The panelists and participants identified a number of suggestions to improve NATO-EU cooperation on civilian-military response capabilities:

- ***The agenda of informal meetings of NATO-EU foreign ministers (note: also known as “at 32” meetings) and regular NAC-PSC and Military Committee meetings should include discussion of cooperation on civilian-military responses.*** One goal of such meetings should be to ensure that consultations occur at the earliest possible stage of an emerging crisis. These senior-level meetings should be complemented by close work at staff levels, to include fuller use of the NATO and EU military liaison cells and improved contacts between the MIC and EADRCC.
- ***As neither NATO nor the EU appears to perform particularly well at early warning, the organizations should reexamine and seek to broaden their information exchange procedures and capabilities.*** This effort should be complemented by increased transparency and cooperation on civilian-military crisis response planning, while respecting the decision-making autonomy of each organization.
- ***Regular NATO-EU exercises focused on civilian-military crisis response capabilities should be carried out.*** These could engage other parties, such as the UN and non-government organizations, and include a sharing of “lessons learned.”

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